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ACTION HA-08

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6656

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FOR HA AND ARA/SC SMITH

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJ: DEPARTMENT QUESTIONS ON DISAPPEARED

REF: STATE 63823

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044;

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full DECONTROL

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

DECONTROL

1. HERewith THE EMBASSY RESPONSES KEYED TO QUESTIONS IN
PARA 3 REFTel. AS A PREFATORY CAUTION, THE DEPARTMENT
SHOULD BE COGNIZANT THAT INFORMATION REQUESTED RARELY IF
EVER IS AVAILABLE IN SUCH SPECIFICITY AS SOME OF THE
QUESTIONS SUGGEST. THIS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY THE CASE
WITH INFORMATION THE GOA HAS PROVIDED TO PETITIONING
FAMILIES CONCERNING CIRCUMSTANCES OF DISAPPEARANCES AND
WHO MIGHT BE RESPONSIBLE. THE KEY POINT IS THAT THE
GOVERNMENT HAS INFORMED FAMILIES THAT LOVED ONES ARE DEAD
IN CONTRAST TO THE DEMANDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS TO
RETURN THEM ALIVE.

A. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, GIVEN TO AN EMBASSY OFFICER AND
AUTHORIZED FOR PUBLICATION IN THE 1982 HUMAN RIGHTS
REPORT. (FYI, THE SPECIFIC NUMBER OF CASES WAS 1,426,
CORRESPONDING TO THE PERIOD THE INFORMATION WAS GIVEN TO
JS, UP TO OCTOBER 29, 1982. ALSO IN PRESS AND CELS
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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REPORTS. SEE ITEM C)

3. NO LIST OF THE CASES WAS PROVIDED. INTERIOR MINISTRY

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OFFICERS SAID THEIR RESPONSIBILITY WAS ONLY TO INFORM FAMILIES.

C. THE GOVERNMENT'S DISPOSITION TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO FAMILIES HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICIZED IN AN ACTIVE SENSE. THE SUBSECRETARY OF INTERIOR LAST NOVEMBER WAS QUOTED IN THE PRESS AS SAYING THAT OF SOME 6,500 REQUESTS, THE GOA HAS PROVIDED INFORMATION IN 1,500 CASES, AND ON FEBRUARY 26 ARMY COMMANDER NICOLAIDES WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT ABOUT 1,000 CASES OF DISAPPEARED HAD BEEN "CLARIFIED"; HE DID NOT SAY FAMILIES HAD BEEN INFORMED IN THESE CASES. THE PROCEDURE FOR PETITIONING THE INTERIOR MINISTRY FOR INFORMATION IS UNDERSTOOD BY RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF MISSING PERSONS AND BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS. REGARDING PROCEDURES USED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION, WE UNDERSTAND THAT A PETITIONER RECEIVES A LETTER REQUESTING HIS APPEARANCE AT THE MINISTRY OR AT A POLICE HEADQUARTERS, WHERE THE INFORMATION IS PROVIDED ORALLY. (CELS' BULLETIN OF NOVEMBER 4, 1982 SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAS ANSWERED REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION IN ABOUT 1000 CASES OF REPORTED DISAPPEARANCES. THE ORGANIZATION ATTRIBUTES THIS TO AN UNIDENTIFIED INTERIOR MINISTRY SPOKESMAN QUOTED IN THE OCTOBER 19 PRESS, BUT DOES NOT ACCEPT THE CLAIM AS TRUE.)

D. THE EMBASSY PRESUMES THERE IS A CLOSE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE INTERIOR MINISTRY LIST OF REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ON DISAPPEARED FROM WHICH ALL THE CASES WERE TAKEN AND THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY LIST. THE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS GENERALLY ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO GO TO THE INTERIOR MINISTRY. (FYI, OUR RECORDS INDICATE THE [REDACTED]
[REDACTED])

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PERMANENT ASSEMBLY LISTS 5,566 CASES OF DOCUMENTED DISAPPEARANCES PLUS ANOTHER 1,164 CASES WHERE COMPLETE INFORMATION IS LACKING, NOT 7,800 AS SENT).

E. NOT TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE EMBASSY. THE PRESIDENT OF THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO TOLD US IN DECEMBER THAT NO MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION HAD RECEIVED SUCH INFORMATION AND THE PRESIDENT OF CELS TOLD US THIS WEEK THAT HE WAS AWARE OF ONLY FOUR OR FIVE CASES WHERE SUCH INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED.

F. THE EMBASSY CANNOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE SOSA CASE, WHICH LED TO THE PUBLICITY LAST

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OCTOBER OF THE NO-NAME GRAVES, BEGAN WITH MINISTRY OF
INTERIOR INFORMATION GIVEN TO A PETITIONING FAMILY IN
FEBRUARY 1981.

G. NOT TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE EMBASSY.

H. NO, NOT BEYOND WHAT MIGHT APPEAR IN THE GOA'S REPORT
ON DISAPPEARANCES, PROMISED FOR PUBLICATION IN LATE MARCH
OR EARLY APRIL.

2. SEPTTEL PROVIDES SUGGESTED Q&A FOR HFAC HEARING MARCH 16
SHLAUDEMAN

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